

Appln. No. 09/599,042

Docket No. 22-0127

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 were submitted for examination and, in the aforementioned Office action, claims 1, 6-11, 17-19, 23-28, 33 and 34 were rejected as allegedly unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Wright et al. (US 6,366,776). Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of allowability of claims 2-5, 12-16, 20-22 and 29-32.

Because the Wright et al. reference did not issue until after the filing date of the present application, the reference can be applied under Section 103(a) only in combination with Section 102(e) of the patent statute. At the time of the present invention, the application from which the Wright et al. patent issued was commonly owned with the present invention and, in fact, continues to be commonly owned. (Please refer to the accompanying Statement Concerning Common Ownership for additional details.) Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of all rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based in whole or in part on the Wright et al. reference, since such rejections are improper under 35 U.S.C. §103(c) for all applications filed since November 29, 1999.

In response to an objection to the drawings, based solely on improper margins, Applicant has today transmitted replacement sheets of drawings by first-class mail.

The references cited but not relied on by the Examiner have been reviewed but are not believed to be pertinent to the present invention as claimed.

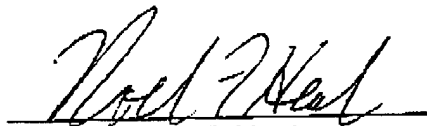
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In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and formal allowance of claims 1-34 as originally submitted and preliminarily amended.

Respectfully submitted,

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